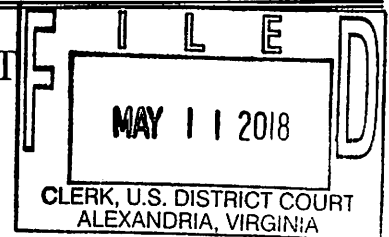


# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the  
Eastern District of Virginia



In the Matter of the Search of  
(Briefly describe the property to be searched  
or identify the person by name and address)

One Rose Gold Apple iPhone, Model SE, IMEI  
356596081613116, Currently Located at ATF  
Washington Division Evidence Vault

Case No. 1:18-SW-279

## APPLICATION FOR A SEARCH WARRANT

I, a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government, request a search warrant and state under penalty of perjury that I have reason to believe that on the following person or property (identify the person or describe the property to be searched and give its location):  
One Rose Gold Apple iPhone, Model SE, IMEI 356596081613116, Currently Located at ATF Washington Division Evidence Vault, as further described in Attachment A (Property to be Searched).

located in the Eastern District of Virginia, there is now concealed (identify the person or describe the property to be seized):  
See Attachment B (Items to be Seized).

The basis for the search under Fed. R. Crim. P. 41(c) is (check one or more):

- ☒ evidence of a crime;
- ☒ contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed;
- ☒ property designed for use, intended for use, or used in committing a crime;
- ☐ a person to be arrested or a person who is unlawfully restrained.

The search is related to a violation of:

| Code Section          | Offense Description                                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(3) | Possession of Firearm by Controlled Substance Abuser. |

The application is based on these facts:

- ☒ Continued on the attached sheet.
- ☐ Delayed notice of        days (give exact ending date if more than 30 days:       ) is requested under 18 U.S.C. § 3103a, the basis of which is set forth on the attached sheet.

Applicant's signature

SAUSA Stephanie Williamson/AUSA Nicholas Murphy

Catherine J. Fields, Special Agent, ATF

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 11 May 18

/s/

Ivan D. Davis

United States Magistrate Judge

City and state: Alexandria, Virginia

**ATTACHMENT A**

**PROPERTY TO BE SEARCHED**

The property to be searched is one rose gold Apple iPhone, Model SE, IMEI: 356596081613116, cellular device (hereinafter the "DEVICE") that was seized by ATF from the person of Brittany Nicole BLANKEN incident to her arrest on April 26, 2018. The DEVICE is currently in ATF custody.

This warrant authorizes the forensic examination of the DEVICE for the purpose of identifying the electronically stored information described in Attachment B.



**ATTACHMENT B**

**ITEMS TO BE SEIZED**

1. All records on the Device described in Attachment A that relate to violations of 18 U.S.C. § 922 and/or 18 U.S.C. § 1952 and involve BLANKEN since November 1, 2017, including:

- a. Incoming/outgoing/missed phone call log(s);
- b. SMS/MMS messages;
- c. voicemail messages;
- d. photographs and videos;
- e. lists of customers and related identifying information (contact list);
- f. any information related to the geographic location of the DEVICE;
- g. The cellular telephone number;
- h. types, amounts, and prices of firearms trafficked as well as dates, places, and amounts of specific transactions;
- i. any information related to sources of firearms (including names, addresses, phone numbers, or any other identifying information);
- j. any information recording BLANKEN's schedule or travel from November 1, 2017 to the present;
- k. any information related to BLANKEN's involvement in coordinating prostitution activities; and
- l. all bank records, checks, credit card bills, account information, and other financial records.

2. Evidence of user attribution showing who used or owned the Device at the time the things described in this warrant were created, edited, or deleted, such as logs, phonebooks, saved usernames and passwords, documents, and browsing history;

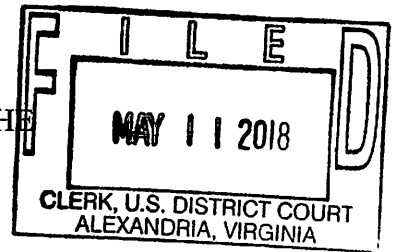
3. Records involving the Internet:

- a. records of Internet Protocol addresses used;
- b. records of Internet activity, including firewall logs, caches, browser history and cookies, "bookmarked" or "favorite" web pages, search terms that the user entered into any Internet search engine, and records of user-typed web addresses.

As used above, the terms "records" and "information" include all of the foregoing items of evidence in whatever form and by whatever means they may have been created or stored, including any form of computer or electronic storage (such as flash memory or other media that can store data) and any photographic form.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

Alexandria Division



IN THE MATTER OF THE SEARCH OF  
ONE ROSE GOLD APPLE iPHONE,  
MODEL SE, IMEI 356596081613116,  
CURRENTLY LOCATED AT ATF  
WASHINGTON DIVISION EVIDENCE  
VAULT; 7799 LEESBURG PIKE, SUITE  
1050N, FALLS CHURCH, VA 22043

Criminal No. 1:18-SW-279

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION UNDER  
RULE 41 FOR A WARRANT TO SEARCH AND SEIZE**

I, Catherine J. Fields, being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

**INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND**

1. I make this affidavit in support of an application under Rule 41 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure for a search warrant authorizing the examination of electronic device. The device to be searched is described in the following paragraphs and in Attachment A. This affidavit is made in support of an application for a search warrant under Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure 41(c), 41(e)(2)(A) and 41(e)(2)(B).

2. I am a Special Agent (SA) with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and have been in my position since January 2010. I received a Bachelor's degree in Political Studies from Meredith College in 2004. I am also a graduate of the Criminal Investigator Training Program and the ATF Special Agent Basic Training programs, which are conducted at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, GA. I was assigned to the ATF Phoenix Field Division, Tucson Field Office, for approximately three years, where the

majority of my investigations were focused on both domestic and international firearms trafficking, illegal possession of firearms, as well as arson and explosives investigations. I am currently assigned to the ATF Washington Field Division. My assignments include investigating individuals who are involved in the illegal possession and transfer of firearms, violent crimes involving firearms, and firearms trafficking.

3. The facts in this affidavit come from my personal observations, my training and experience, and information obtained from other agents and witnesses. This affidavit is intended to show only that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested warrant and does not set forth all of my knowledge about this matter. All observations referenced in this affidavit that I did not personally make were relayed to me by the person(s) who made such observations or in reports that detailed the events described by those person(s).

4. Based on my training and experience and the facts as set forth in this affidavit, there is probable cause to believe that violations of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(3), among other crimes, have been committed by Brittany Nicole BLANKEN ("BLANKEN"). There is also probable cause to search the property described in Attachment A and to seize the evidence, fruits, instrumentalities, and contraband set forth in Attachment B relating to these violations.

#### **PROBABLE CAUSE**

5. This investigation originated on or about January 18, 2018, when ATF SA Kelly Long reviewed Firearms Trace Summary Reports regarding three firearms recovered from two stolen rental vehicles in Maryland. These reports showed Amanda Ward ("Ward") had recently

purchased one of the three recovered firearms from a Federal Firearms Licensee (“FFL”) located in the Eastern District of Virginia.

6. Specifically, on December 20, 2017, Maryland Transportation Authority Police (“MDTAP”) recovered the first two firearms from a repossessed rental vehicle. Budget Rental Car (“Budget”) located the overdue vehicle, a 2017 GMC SUV, on December 14, 2017, at the Knights Inn Hotel in Laurel, Maryland. Sharon Haddock was the listed renter on the vehicle’s rental agreement. Law enforcement databases confirmed that Sharon Haddock is Keith Haddock II’s (“Haddock”) mother, and subsequent investigation confirmed BLANKEN and Haddock are in a romantic relationship and live together. On December 20, 2017, Budget was able to gain key-entry access to the locked vehicle and employees who were cleaning the vehicle found two handguns, which Budget quickly reported to MDTAP. An MDTAP Detective and MDTAP officers responded to the BWI Airport Budget facility and processed the vehicle for evidence.

7. While processing the vehicle for evidence, law enforcement recovered: a Springfield Model XD .45 caliber pistol with serial number US596507; a Glock Model 17 9 millimeter pistol with serial number VUH372; and a hotel receipt for a one night stay (12/6/2017-12/7/2017) at the Knights Inn, located at 3380 Fort Meade Road, Laurel, Maryland. The hotel receipt listed Haddock as the renter. Haddock is a twice-convicted felon who is not lawfully able to possess firearms.

8. An ATF Firearms E-Trace showed that Ward purchased the aforementioned recovered Springfield Model XD .45 caliber pistol from Dominion Defense at the Fishersville Gun Expo on December 10, 2017. The recovered Springfield pistol was in the stolen rental vehicle

within four (4) days of Ward's purchase.

9. Then, on January 12, 2018, the Anne Arundel County Police Department ("AACPD") recovered a second rental vehicle, which Enterprise Holdings had reported stolen on January 3, 2018, from a parking lot adjacent to a Burlington Coat Factory in Hanover, Maryland. Marcus Allen ("Allen") was the listed vehicle renter. During a vehicle inventory, an AACPD Officer recovered: a Taurus Model Millennium G2 9 millimeter pistol with serial number TKT02098, loaded with six rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber; and a prescription bottle with Allen's name on it. Allen is a convicted felon and, as a result, is not lawfully able to possess a firearm.

10. An ATF Firearms E-Trace showed that Ward purchased the aforementioned recovered Taurus Model Millennium G2 9 millimeter pistol from CK3 Guns at the SGK Gun Show in Fredericksburg, Virginia, within the Eastern District of Virginia, on December 16, 2017. Law enforcement recovered the firearm within twenty-seven (27) days of its purchase by Ward.

11. SA Long visited Dominion Defense on January 19, 2018 and spoke with two employees. An employee specifically recalled Ward and said Ward was with a skinny white female with red hair (known to law enforcement as BLANKEN), a black male who had freckles or warts all over his face (known to law enforcement as Haddock), and a white male (known to law enforcement as Ronald Blanken), at the Fishersville Gun Expo on December 10, 2017. Subsequently, the employee identified photographs of BLANKEN, Haddock, and Ronald Blanken as the previously described individuals.

12. Further investigation showed that Ward and her boyfriend, Ronald Blanken, who



is also BLANKEN's brother, purchased twenty-eight (28) firearms from FFLs within the Eastern District of Virginia between December 3, 2017 and January 6, 2018. In addition, Ward purchased two (2) firearms from a FFL located in the Western District of Virginia. Nineteen (19) of the firearms were purchased by Ward and eleven (11) of the firearms were purchased by Ronald Blanken after Trojan Arms and Tactical informed Ward she was "flagged."

13. Employees and owners of the various FFLs where Ward and Ronald Blanken purchased these firearms recalled Ward visiting gun shows and FFLs in a group consisting of another female and two males. Specifically, multiple eye witnesses stated that they saw Ward with a skinny white female with red hair (later identified as BLANKEN), a black male who had freckles or warts all over his face (known to law enforcement as BLANKEN's boyfriend and/or pimp, Haddock), and another white male (known to law enforcement as Ronald Blanken).

14. On December 9, 2017, Ward purchased five (5) firearms from Trojan Arms and Tactical at the Meadow Event Park Gun Show in Doswell, Virginia, within the Eastern District of Virginia. One of Ward's purchases was a purple SCCY Industries Model CPX-1 9 millimeter pistol with serial number 600323, which Ward purchased on behalf of BLANKEN.

**A. BLANKEN'S Social Media Posts**

15. SA Mensah identified the "hisqueen4g\_2018" Instagram page as belonging to BLANKEN based on comparing photographs posted within the Instagram account to BLANKEN's mug shot. BLANKEN's public Instagram account included numerous Instagram posts related to chronic marijuana usage and other criminal activity. For example, on January 20, 2018, BLANKEN posted a photo depicting a yellow bed spread covered with bags of leafy

substances that appeared to be marijuana. The caption of the photo read, "...All we smoke Is That Good Shit !!!" and included a smoke emoticon and the statement "All Gas." Based on my training and experience, I know that "gas" is a common reference for high-grade marijuana that emits a strong, lingering odor. Then, on January 24, 2018, BLANKEN posted a video of three large, clear zip-lock bags containing leafy substances that appeared to be marijuana on the same aforementioned yellow bed spread. The caption on the video read, "New ones today!!! Switching flavors" and contained several emoticons, including five smoke emoticons. The same day, BLANKEN posted another video on her Instagram account that showed approximately six zip-lock bags filled with a leafy substance that appeared to be marijuana on the same aforementioned yellow bed spread. The caption for this video read, "Which One To Smoke got different Flavors for that ass !!!" followed by several emoticons, including six smoke emoticons. The same day, BLANKEN posted a video of herself and an individual that appears to be Haddock, in which BLANKEN is smoking what appears to be a large marijuana "blunt." Then, on January 26, 2018, BLANKEN posted a video of herself smoking what appeared to be marijuana. In addition, on January 30, 2018, BLANKEN posted a video of three clear plastic bags filled with leafy substances that appeared to be marijuana. The caption to the video read, "And once Again It's Everyday thing Baby," and contained several emoticons, including a smoke emoticon. Based on my experience and training, I interpreted this caption to mean that BLANKEN smokes marijuana on a daily basis.

16. On January 28, 2018, a picture of what appeared to be the same purple SCCY Industries CPX-1 pistol Ward purchased from Trojan Arms and Tactical appeared on BLANKEN's public Instagram account page, "hisqueen4g\_2018." Specifically, on January 28,

2018, “hisqueen4g\_2018” posted an image of a purple SCCY CPX-1 pistol, a large amount of folded currency, and a zip-lock bag containing a leafy substance that resembled marijuana. A comment to the picture from “hisqueen4g\_2018” read, “My Mood EveryDay” and was followed by several emoticons, including four smoke emoticons.

17. BLANKEN’s public Instagram account also included numerous Instagram posts referencing prostitution and Haddock as her pimp. For example, on January 19, 2018, BLANKEN posted a video with Haddock, with a caption that referenced Haddock as, “That’s Daddy...,” followed by several emoticons, including three money emoticons. Based on my training and experience, I know that the term “daddy” in the prostitution world is a common reference for a prostitute’s pimp. Then, on January 20, 2018, BLANKEN posted a video of several containers of food at a restaurant with the caption, “Daddy make sure we Eat !!!” In addition, on January 23, 2018, BLANKEN posted a photograph of several shopping bags with the caption, “Daddy keep his Bitch on Top !!!” On January 24, 2018, BLANKEN posted a video of herself with the caption, “Always looking Like Money Bitch You Forgot I Am the Money.” Then, on February 5, 2018, BLANKEN posted a photograph of the following statement: “GET U A BITCH THAT WON’T REST UNTIL SHE GET U RICH!” Finally, on February 8, 2018, BLANKEN posted a photograph of a meme that reads, “It be all fun & games till these hoes fall out with da friend they use to sell pussy with.” BLANKEN commented on this photo, “Real shit theses Bitchez Fake as Fuck Out Here Lmao Bitch you the same one Who was out there doing it lmao.”

18. On February 5 and 6, 2018, Haddock’s Instagram account, “frankwhite4g,” posted versions of a rap video for “Blessings (Freestyle)”, starring Keith Haddock II, in which

BLANKEN also appears. In the videos, BLANKEN is holding a purple pistol while standing or dancing near Haddock. Ward viewed one of the videos in my presence on February 15, 2018 and confirmed that she recognized two of the guns in the video—the aforementioned purple SCCY pistol and a gun Haddock has in the video—as guns Ward purchased on behalf of BLANKEN and Haddock.

**B. BLANKEN's Custodial Interview with Montgomery County Detectives**

19. On February 8, 2018, BLANKEN was arrested at the Extended Stay Hotel in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Gaithersburg Police Officers searched the hotel room where BLANKEN was arrested and found the same purple SCCY Industries CPX-1 9 millimeter pistol with serial number 600323 that Ward purchased for BLANKEN on December 9, 2017, hidden under a mattress in the room.

20. Shortly thereafter, BLANKEN consented to a custodial interview with Montgomery County Detectives. During the interview, BLANKEN admitted that the purple SCCY 9 millimeter pistol was hers. Furthermore, she explained to the detectives that she had Ward purchase the firearm for her at a gun show in Virginia.

**C. Ward's Interview**

21. On February 15, 2018, SA Bernard Mensah and I interviewed Ward in reference to nineteen (19) firearms Ward purchased at multiple gun shows and FFLs, including seventeen (17) firearms she purchased at FFLs within the Eastern District of Virginia between December 3 and 26, 2017.

22. During the interview, Ward confirmed she had purchased several guns, including

the aforementioned purple pistol recovered in BLANKEN's possession. Ward asked if the interview had anything to do with Brittany Blanken (BLANKEN), whom Ward referred to as her "sister-in-law."

23. Ward described BLANKEN's latest boyfriend and/or "daddy" as a very tall, skinny, light skinned, black male with freckles and tattoos and said she knew him as "Frank." Ward then accessed Frank's Instagram page, which had the user ID "frankwhite4g," from her phone. Law enforcement had previously identified this Instagram page as belonging to Haddock II.

24. Ward explained that BLANKEN called her "the other day" to inform Ward that she (BLANKEN) had been arrested with the purple SCCY pistol Ward had purchased for her. Ward explained that Frank told BLANKEN, "You have 24 hours to let [Ward] know and that you're [BLANKEN] going to take a stolen gun charge." Ward explained that in order to keep Ward out of trouble, Frank commanded BLANKEN to alert Ward about the recovered firearm and to tell Ward that she, BLANKEN, would be confessing to a stolen gun charge. Frank told BLANKEN that Ward was doing them a favor and helping them make money, therefore, Ward should not be responsible for BLANKEN's carelessness. Ward further stated that BLANKEN told her that one of Frank and BLANKEN's rental vehicles containing a firearm Ward had purchased for them had been impounded.

25. Ward explained that BLANKEN had called and asked Ward to "do gun shows with her" because BLANKEN and Frank had stolen firearms from gun shows in the past but did not want to continue doing so for fear of getting caught. Ward stated that she agreed to purchase firearms on behalf of BLANKEN and Frank in exchange for three thousand dollars (\$3,000) and

an iPad. Ward explained that Frank purchased an iPad Pro for Ward from the Sprint store in Manassas, VA for approximately \$300 and stated that Frank pays the monthly service bill for the device, but that he never paid Ward the \$3,000.

26. Ward stated that Frank and BLANKEN accompanied Ward to every location at which she made a firearms purchase. She stated that after she purchased the firearms, she would leave them in the vehicle Frank and BLANKEN were driving.

27. Ward did not know what happened to the firearms after she transferred them to Frank and BLANKEN, but she was positive that she saw some of the firearms she purchased for Frank and BLANKEN in Frank's "little music videos." Then, Ward accessed the Instagram profile "frankwhite4g" and played a music video; Ward said she recognized the purple SCCY pistol she purchased for BLANKEN in the video "Blessings."

28. When asked if BLANKEN used drugs, Ward said BLANKEN was a bitch if she doesn't smoke and implied that BLANKEN, therefore, smokes marijuana regularly. Ward stated that she witnessed BLANKEN smoking marijuana on multiple occasions.

29. Ward further stated that BLANKEN was involved in prostitution and that she believed Haddock was BLANKEN's pimp. SA Mensah's and my review of public records showed that, on February 26, 2015, BLANKEN was charged in Prince George's County District Court with three counts of Prostitution and two counts of Human Trafficking. Then, on March 3, 2015, BLANKEN was charged in Prince George's County District Court with three additional counts of Prostitution and pled guilty to one count on October 7, 2015. Finally, on September 21, 2017, in what is currently a pending matter, BLANKEN and Haddock were charged in Prince George's

County District Court with four counts of Prostitution and three counts of Human Trafficking.

**D. Ronald Blanken Interview**

30. On February 20, 2018, SA Mensah and I interviewed Ronald Blanken in Manassas, Virginia. Throughout the interview, Ronald Blanken confirmed that his sister, BLANKEN, was an avid drug user and frequently manipulated people to get what she wanted.

31. Ronald Blanken stated that Ward approached him with the idea to purchase firearms for Frank and BLANKEN after BLANKEN called Ward and offered \$3,000 for Ward's and Ronald Blanken's participation. Ronald Blanken agreed to participate in the scheme because he believed BLANKEN and Frank were going to give Ronald Blanken and Ward the \$3,000 payment. BLANKEN also offered to buy Ronald Blanken a Mossberg Shockwave firearm for Christmas as an additional payment.

32. Ronald Blanken recalled attending approximately four gun shows with Ward, Frank, and BLANKEN in order to purchase firearms for Frank and BLANKEN. Ronald Blanken explained that, initially, Ward was going to put all the firearms in her name, but after Trojan Arms and Tactical refused to sell Ward any additional firearms, Ronald Blanken started to purchase firearms for Frank and BLANKEN. Ronald Blanken said he thought if he purchased firearms for Frank and BLANKEN, Ward would eventually receive the \$3,000 Frank and BLANKEN had promised them. However, Ronald Blanken stated that Frank only gave him \$100 once and that was the only payment he ever received for purchasing firearms for Frank and BLANKEN.

33. Ronald Blanken remembered that there were two firearms in the vehicle the first

time Frank and BLANKEN picked up Ward and Ronald Blanken to attend a gun show together. BLANKEN bragged about how she and Frank had stolen firearms from at least one gun show before Ronald Blanken and Ward started purchasing firearms for them.

34. Ronald Blanken stated that the last time he went to purchase firearms for Frank and BLANKEN, BLANKEN and Frank argued because the gun show did not have all the firearms Frank wanted. Ronald Blanken further stated that the firearms Frank wanted were too expensive for Frank. Ronald Blanken stated that during the argument, Frank told BLANKEN, “You gonna spend all that money and only be able to make fifty dollars.”

35. I showed Ronald Blanken Haddock’s YouTube rap video, “Blessings.” Ronald Blanken stated that he recognized four firearms from the video as firearms Ronald Blanken and/or Ward had purchased for Frank and BLANKEN. One of the firearms Ronald Blanken recognized was a purple SCCY pistol that BLANKEN was holding in the “Blessings” video as one Ward had purchased for BLANKEN.

36. Ronald Blanken further stated that he suspected that Frank was BLANKEN’s pimp and was “tricking her out.”

**E. BLANKEN’s traffic stop in Fairfax County, Virginia**

37. At approximately 3:30 a.m., on September 7, 2017, BLANKEN was stopped in a traffic stop by a Fairfax County Police Department (“FCPD”) officer. The subjects in the vehicle at the time of the stop were BLANKEN, Haddock, Aija Bryant and another female. Based on information and belief, Aija Bryant is a trafficking victim who has engaged in prostitution for BLANKEN and Haddock.



38. The FCPD officer initiated the traffic stop after he observed a vehicle speeding on Route 28 Southbound at Willard Road in Chantilly, VA. Officer Smith's LIDAR registered the vehicle travelling at 78 m.p.h. in a 55 m.p.h. zone. The driver of the vehicle was identified as BLANKEN, who told Officer Smith that she did not have a license and provided him with her date of birth. Haddock was in the front passenger seat, and the two other women were in the backseat area.

39. The FCPD officer smelled an odor of marijuana coming from inside the vehicle. He then asked the occupants to exit the vehicle so he could perform a vehicle search. Each of the four subjects explained to the officer that there was no marijuana in the car but admitted that they smoked marijuana earlier in the day. They further explained that was the likely reason the officer smelled marijuana coming from the vehicle.

40. During the search of the vehicle, the FCPD officer recovered a loaded black Smith & Wesson LCP .380 pistol bearing serial number KDV3793 from the vehicle's center console. The firearm was equipped with an extended magazine with a round in the chamber. BLANKEN informed the officer she knew the gun was in the vehicle but stated that it was not hers.

**F. HADDOCK's Instagram Search Warrant Return**

41. On May 7, 2018, ATF SA Bernard Mensah and I reviewed results from an Instagram search warrant executed on an account for "frankwhite4g" belonging to Haddock. We found numerous posts, texts, direct message conversations, and pictures related to firearms trafficking and other illegal activity.

42. For example, Haddock reached out to “blackpablo74” on January 25, 2018 and “blackpablo74” asked, “What good you need them or what”? Haddock stated, “Wat u got for me” and “blackpablo74” responded, “9s...5 of em”. Based on my training and experience, I know the term “9(s)” to be consistent with 9mm caliber handguns or pistols. Haddock continued with, “Wat kind” and “Blackpablo74” responded with, “3 of them”. There was a picture of a purple SCCY pistol. It was unclear who sent the photo to whom. However, right after the photo, Haddock wrote, “Got my bitch dat already.” The pistol captured in the image resembled a purple SCCY, 9mm, pistol recovered on Haddock’s girlfriend, BLANKEN, during her February 8, 2018 arrest by Gaithersburg Police Department. The firearm also resembled the purple SCCY pistol brandished by BLANKEN in Haddock’s YouTube music video, “Blessings.”

43. Based on my training and experience, I know that the firearms purchased for BLANKEN by Ward and/or Ronald Blanken constitute firearms pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 921(a)(3), were not manufactured in the State of Virginia, and, therefore, these firearms traveled in, and/or affected interstate commerce.

44. On April 26, 2018, SA Mensah obtained a federal arrest warrant for BLANKEN with respect to the aforementioned crimes. On April 26, 2018, ATF SA Ioannis Douroupis, along with the United States Marshals Service, executed the arrest warrant in San Bernardino, California, and arrested BLANKEN. SA Douroupis seized one (1) Apple iPhone possessed by BLANKEN at the time of her arrest.

45. BLANKEN’S Apple iPhone (hereinafter “the Device”) is currently in the lawful possession of the ATF Washington Division. The Device has been stored in a manner in which

its contents are, to the extent material to this investigation, in substantially the same state as they were when the Device first came into the possession of the ATF Los Angeles Division and the ATF Washington Division.

46. Based upon the information provided by Ward and Ronald Blanken, the rose gold iPhone SE described in Attachment A was frequently used by BLANKEN to coordinate firearms trafficking and other criminal acts. Ward confirmed that she received text messages, phone calls, and Instagram communications via BLANKEN's rose gold iPhone SE, which is the same type of phone as the Device agents seized from BLANKEN when they arrested her.

47. Furthermore, BLANKEN's reliance on electronic communication and the frequency with which she uses social media, as well as the common knowledge that smartphones like the Device are used for communication and to access and post on social media, there is probable cause to believe that the electronically stored information described in Attachment B is recorded on the Device described in Attachment A. BLANKEN likely used the Device to communicate with people to whom she sold the straw purchased firearms, to coordinate unlawful prostitution, and communicate with others involved in her criminal activity, via phone calls, SMS messages, and through various applications such as Instagram Direct Messenger. Electronic devices such as the Device maintain this electronically stored information, which can be recovered by a digital media collection specialist.

48. Based on my experience and training, and all the facts and opinions set forth in this affidavit, I believe that information relevant to the unlawful activities of BLANKEN and others, such as telephone numbers, made and received calls, contact names, electronic mail

(email) addresses, appointment dates, messages, pictures, and other digital information are stored in the memory of the Device described herein.

49. While law enforcement may already have all necessary authority to examine the Device, I seek this additional warrant out of an abundance of caution to be certain that an examination of the Device will comply with the Fourth Amendment and other applicable laws.

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE DEVICE TO BE EXAMINED**

50. Based on my training, experience, and participation in firearms investigations, and the training and experience of other law enforcement agents with whom I am working on this investigation, I know that:

- a. It is common for individuals engaged in the illegal purchase or distribution of firearms and prostitution to use telephonic communications, both cellular (to include voice and text messages) and hard line, to further their criminal activities by coordinating the purchase and/or distribution of firearms, illegal proceeds of such purchases and/or trafficking, prostitution activities, and other efforts of co-conspirators.
- b. Individuals engaging in the illegal purchase or distribution of firearms and prostitution use cellular telephones and cellular telephone technology to communicate and remain in contact with customers and the sources of those firearms and customers from their illegal prostitution activities; and
- c. Individuals who engage in the illegal purchase or distribution of firearms and illegal prostitution activities use cellular telephones to exchange information with

customers and/or sources of supply through text messaging and instant messaging in addition to direct telephone conversations. It is also common for firearms traffickers and prostitutes to send photographs and videos as exchange of information with customers and/or source(s) of supply.

- d. Data extracted from cellular devices, including text messages and e-mails, can provide law enforcement with details about an individual's residence and locations where the individual frequents.

51. The Device to be searched is a rose gold Apple iPhone Model SE, cellular phone, with IMEI 356596081613116. The Device was seized from BLANKEN's person during the course of her arrest on April 26, 2018. The Device is currently located at the ATF WASHINGTON FIELD DIVISION, Falls Church Field Office, 7799 Leesburg Pike # 1050N, Falls Church, Virginia, 22043.

52. The applied-for warrant would authorize the forensic examination of the Device for the purpose of identifying electronically stored data particularly described in Attachment B.

#### **TECHNICAL TERMS**

53. Based on my training and experience, I use the following technical terms to convey the following meanings:

- a. Wireless telephone: A wireless telephone (or mobile telephone, or cellular telephone) is a handheld wireless device used for voice and data communication through radio signals. These telephones send signals through networks of transmitter/receivers, enabling communication with other wireless

telephones or traditional “land line” telephones. A wireless telephone usually contains a “call log,” which records the telephone number, date, and time of calls made to and from the phone. In addition to enabling voice communications, wireless telephones offer a broad range of capabilities. These capabilities include: storing names and phone numbers in electronic “address books;” sending, receiving, and storing text messages and e-mail; taking, sending, receiving, and storing still photographs and moving video; storing and playing back audio files; storing dates, appointments, and other information on personal calendars; and accessing and downloading information from the Internet. Wireless telephones may also include global positioning system (“GPS”) technology for determining the location of the device.

- b. Digital camera: A digital camera is a camera that records pictures as digital picture files, rather than by using photographic film. Digital cameras use a variety of fixed and removable storage media to store their recorded images. Images can usually be retrieved by connecting the camera to a computer or by connecting the removable storage medium to a separate reader. Removable storage media include various types of flash memory cards or miniature hard drives. Most digital cameras also include a screen for viewing the stored images. This storage media can contain any digital data, including data unrelated to photographs or videos.

- c. Portable media player: A portable media player (or “MP3 Player” or iPod) is a handheld digital storage device designed primarily to store and play audio, video, or photographic files. However, a portable media player can also store other digital data. Some portable media players can use removable storage media. Removable storage media include various types of flash memory cards or miniature hard drives. This removable storage media can also store any digital data. Depending on the model, a portable media player may have the ability to store very large amounts of electronic data and may offer additional features such as a calendar, contact list, clock, or games.
- d. GPS: A GPS navigation device uses the Global Positioning System to display its current location. It often contains records the locations where it has been. Some GPS navigation device can give a user driving or walking directions to another location. This device can contain records of the addresses or locations involved in such navigation. The Global Positioning System (generally abbreviated “GPS”) consists of 24 NAVSTAR satellites orbiting the Earth. Each satellite contains an extremely accurate clock. Each satellite repeatedly transmits by radio a mathematical representation of the current time, combined with a special sequence of numbers. These signals are sent by radio, using specifications that are publicly available. A GPS antenna on Earth can receive those signals. When a GPS antenna receives signals from at least four satellites, a computer connected to that antenna can mathematically

calculate the antenna's latitude, longitude, and sometimes altitude with a high level of precision.

- e. IP Address: An Internet Protocol address (or simply "IP address") is a unique numeric address used by computers on the Internet. An IP address is a series of four numbers, each in the range 0-255, separated by periods (e.g., 121.56.97.178). Every computer attached to the Internet computer must be assigned an IP address so that Internet traffic sent from and directed to that computer may be directed properly from its source to its destination. Most Internet service providers control a range of IP addresses. Some computers have static—that is, long-term—IP addresses, while other computers have dynamic—that is, frequently changed—IP addresses.
- f. Internet: The Internet is a global network of computers and other electronic devices that communicate with each other. Due to the structure of the Internet, connections between devices on the Internet often cross state and international borders, even when the devices communicating with each other are in the same state.

54. Based on my training, experience, and research, I know that the Device has capabilities that allow them to serve as a repository of information that may provide crucial evidence of the "who, what, why, when, where, and how" of the criminal conduct under investigation, thus enabling the United States to establish and prove each element of a crime, or, alternatively, to exclude the innocent from further suspicion. In my training and experience,



information stored within a wireless cellular telephone (e.g., registry information, communications, images and movies, transactional information, records of session times and durations, Internet history, and anti-virus, spyware, and malware detection programs) can indicate who has used or controlled the Device or other electronic devices. In my training and experience, examining data stored on a device of this type can uncover, among other things, evidence that reveals or suggests who possessed or used the Device.

### **ELECTRONIC STORAGE AND FORENSIC ANALYSIS**

55. Based on my knowledge, training, and experience, I know that the electronic device can store information for long periods of time. The Device is a type of wireless telephone that normally has internet access. Similarly, things that have been viewed via the Internet are typically stored for some period of time on the Device. This information can sometimes be recovered with forensics tools.

56. *Forensic evidence.* As further described in Attachment B, this application seeks permission to locate not only electronically stored information that might serve as direct evidence of the crimes described on the warrant, but also forensic evidence that establishes how the Device is used, the purpose of their use, who used them, and when. There is probable cause to believe that this forensic electronic evidence might be on the Device because:

- a. Data on the storage medium can provide evidence of a file that was once on the storage medium but has since been deleted or edited, or of a deleted portion of a file (such as a paragraph that has been deleted from a word processing file).
- b. Forensic evidence on the Device can also indicate who has used or controlled the

device. This “user attribution” evidence is analogous to the search for “indicia of occupancy” while executing a search warrant at a residence.

- c. A person with appropriate familiarity with how electronic devices work may, after examining this forensic evidence in its proper context, be able to draw conclusions about how electronic devices were used, the purpose of their use, who used them, and when.
- d. The process of identifying the exact electronically stored information on a storage medium that are necessary to draw an accurate conclusion is a dynamic process. Electronic evidence is not always data that can be merely reviewed by a review team and passed along to investigators. Whether data stored on a computer is evidence may depend on other information stored on the computer and the application of knowledge about how a computer behaves. Therefore, contextual information necessary to understand other evidence also falls within the scope of the warrant.
- e. Further, in finding evidence of how the Device was used, the purpose of its use, who used it, and when, sometimes it is necessary to establish that a particular thing is not present on a storage medium.

57. *Nature of examination.* Based on the foregoing, and consistent with Rule 41(e)(2)(B), the warrant I am applying for would permit the examination of the device consistent with the warrant. The examination may require authorities to employ techniques, including but not limited to computer-assisted scans of the entire medium, that might expose many parts of the

Device to human inspection in order to determine whether they are evidence described by the warrant.

58. *Manner of execution.* Because this warrant seeks only permission to examine the Device already in law enforcement's possession, the execution of this warrant does not involve the physical intrusion onto a premises. Consequently, I submit there is reasonable cause for the Court to authorize execution of the warrant at any time in the day or night.

**CONCLUSION**

59. Based on the aforementioned factual information, I respectfully submit that probable cause exists to believe that BLANKEN has violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(3), among other crimes, and that evidence, contraband, and fruits and instrumentalities of such crimes, as described in Attachment B, will be located on the Device described in Attachment A.

60. This Court has jurisdiction to issue the requested warrant pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 41(b)(1). Specifically, “a magistrate judge with authority in the district ... has authority to issue a warrant to search for and seize a person or property located within the district.” Fed. R. Crim. Proc. 41(b)(1).

61. Based on the foregoing, I respectfully request that the Court issue the proposed search warrant.

Respectfully submitted,



\_\_\_\_\_  
Special Agent Catherine J. Fields  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Subscribed and sworn to before me  
On the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 2018.



/s/

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ivan D. Davis

United States Magistrate Judge

**ATTACHMENT A**

**PROPERTY TO BE SEARCHED**

The property to be searched is one rose gold Apple iPhone, Model SE, IMEI: 356596081613116, cellular device (hereinafter the “DEVICE”) that was seized by ATF from the person of Brittany Nicole BLANKEN incident to her arrest on April 26, 2018. The DEVICE is currently in ATF custody.

This warrant authorizes the forensic examination of the DEVICE for the purpose of identifying the electronically stored information described in Attachment B.



**ATTACHMENT B**

**ITEMS TO BE SEIZED**

1. All records on the Device described in Attachment A that relate to violations of 18 U.S.C. § 922 and/or 18 U.S.C. § 1952 and involve BLANKEN since November 1, 2017, including:

- a. Incoming/outgoing/missed phone call log(s);
- b. SMS/MMS messages;
- c. voicemail messages;
- d. photographs and videos;
- e. lists of customers and related identifying information (contact list);
- f. any information related to the geographic location of the DEVICE;
- g. The cellular telephone number;
- h. types, amounts, and prices of firearms trafficked as well as dates, places, and amounts of specific transactions;
- i. any information related to sources of firearms (including names, addresses, phone numbers, or any other identifying information);
- j. any information recording BLANKEN's schedule or travel from November 1, 2017 to the present;
- k. any information related to BLANKEN's involvement in coordinating prostitution activities; and
- l. all bank records, checks, credit card bills, account information, and other financial records.

2. Evidence of user attribution showing who used or owned the Device at the time

the things described in this warrant were created, edited, or deleted, such as logs, phonebooks, saved usernames and passwords, documents, and browsing history;

3. Records involving the Internet:

- a. records of Internet Protocol addresses used;
- b. records of Internet activity, including firewall logs, caches, browser history and cookies, “bookmarked” or “favorite” web pages, search terms that the user entered into any Internet search engine, and records of user-typed web addresses.

As used above, the terms “records” and “information” include all of the foregoing items of evidence in whatever form and by whatever means they may have been created or stored, including any form of computer or electronic storage (such as flash memory or other media that can store data) and any photographic form.